



North Carolina Folklore Journal

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Cover Illustrations: (Front) Felipe Jesus Consalvos untitled work (The Fun Doctor), c. 1920-1950s, mixed media collage on paper, 26 x 21 inches (FJC 517). (Back) Consalvos untitled work (Paremos la Agresion), c. 1920-1950s, mixed media collage on paper, artist's frame, 22 3/4 x 18 inches (FJC 87).



Editor's Foreword

By Philip E. "Ted" Coyle

This issue features recent work from the University of North Carolina's Curriculum in Folklore. This nationally recognized graduate program has produced many of the leading folklorists working in North Carolina today. The articles included in this issue come from a student-organized panel presented as part of the Curriculum's ongoing colloquium entitled *New Directions in Folklore: Pushing the Boundaries of Inquiry*, which is free and open to the public. These articles, all written by emerging young scholars, give us an indication of the richness of recent folklore studies in North Carolina and the importance of UNC's Curriculum in Folklore for inspiring and training the next generation of folklorists in our state.

Based on these articles, a few key themes are evident in folklore's "new directions." One of these is an eclectic interest in a range of topics that might not at first seem to fall within the purview of folklore. As the Curriculum's website points out, "Curriculum members work extensively in the public sphere, pursuing projects with museums, arts councils, media production companies, and a range of other organizations" (Program Profile). The work presented here certainly shares this commitment to bringing the perspectives of folklore to the cultural studies of a variety of contemporary settings.

These authors also all focus on what Erving Goffman (1974) called "frames and framing." These are the cues, or "keys," that help us understand what is going on in a particular social situation. Is this

Frame photograph: The authors of this issue's articles present their work at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. Photo courtesy of Jocelyn Arem.

room “a restaurant” or is it “a classroom”? Tablecloths or chalkboards help us—or, more sinisterly, they force us—to agree and so comport ourselves in ways that are appropriate to that “frame.” Perhaps it is inevitable, in our media-saturated world of Baudrillardian “hyper-reality,” that the shifting meaning of terms like “tradition” and “heritage” would become a crucial point of study for folklorists. Instead of attempting to distinguish “folklore” from “fakelore,” a quest that marched through the pages of this Journal in the 1970s, these emerging folklorists are more interested in deciphering the “keys” that activate particular frames of interpretation, particularly frames of interpretation that involve contested notions of “tradition” or “heritage.” For author Jocelyn Arem the use of these keys by corporate giants like Starbucks to frame, and so claim, the counter-cultural heritage of coffeehouses is a gauntlet that she can not ignore. Janet Hoshour similarly attempts to reclaim “heritage,” this time from the seemingly unquenchable maw that is the global home improvement industry. Katherine Doss takes a different approach by using a folkloristic perspective to reveal a complex series of frames that helps to account for the dedication of New Orleans Saints football fans. Finally, Brendan Greaves explores the “vernacular modernist” work of Felipe Jesus Consalvos, an artist who devoted his life to cutting-and-pasting together keys from diverse frames in order to elaborate a heroic world of his own making. Like him, these authors are “creators and healers,” crafting work that provides suggestive new ways for understanding the flux of meaning today.

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“A Paper Wedding”: The Vernacular Modernism of Felipe Jesus Consalvos

By Brendan Greaves

Felipe Jesus Consalvos might be the least famous guest ever to appear on *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*. Actually, and appropriately, he only appeared by proxy or in surrogate, behind the opaque mask of his artwork. But this July, while I lay on a dank Days Inn duvet in rainy Tampa, I watched an image of his work flash on network television. For a few zoomed-in seconds, Conan O'Brien held a miniature reproduction of a Consalvos collage in his hand, printed on the cover of the new record by Philadelphia rockers Dr. Dog. This moment was pretty remarkable, and not only as an uncanny (and rare) media validation of my research. Since his first solo exhibition in 2004, probably a good forty or fifty years after his death, Consalvos has created a minor sensation in the vexed and insular world of vernacular art. His work has sold well to public and private collections throughout the U.S. and in Europe, and certain curators and critics, myself included, have fawned over it. (Roberta Smith of the *New York Times* called him, keenly if a little oddly, a “self-starting mod-

A writer, curator, and sometime musician, Brendan Greaves recently received an M.A. in Folklore from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he was awarded the Archie Green Occupational Folklife Fellowship for his thesis research on Felipe Jesus Consalvos. A graduate of Harvard University's Visual and Environmental Studies department, he served as curator at the Fleisher/Ollman Gallery in Philadelphia before moving to the South.

Frame photograph: Detail from Consalvos's untitled work (Paremos la Agresion), c. 1920-1950s, mixed media collage on paper (FJC 87).



Untitled work (*Travelers: Signals of Danger*), c. 1920-1950s, mixed media collage on paper, 20 3/4 x 29 1/2 inches (FJC 202).

ernist" [Smith E33].) But far weirder and more unexpected than this circumscribed art-world emergence was the sudden national television exposure of a practice long hidden from sight in a West Philly garage. Against all odds, and in a somewhat unsettling breach of his now defenseless privacy, an artist's strident voice of resistance had finally found its satirical mark and a pop-culture public. Swallowed by the TV screen, if only for an instant, Consalvos smiled inside the belly of the beast, an anonymous morsel for the insatiable appetite of the modern North American media machine he both satirized and celebrated.¹

And yet Cuban American collage artist and cigarmaker Felipe Jesus Consalvos is a mystery and may well remain one. I'm supposedly the expert on this artist, but I don't pretend to understand the man. My approach has been to try to construct a contextual chassis around the spectral core of his identity, to use his art as an engine to examine the ways in which material culture, art history, and labor interpenetrate. I'm interested in how his negotiation of what we might call vernacular modernism—his articulation of "folk" forms and modernist tactics—can bridge the dichotomous (and specious) divides between "folk" and "fine," "low" and "high," "labor" and "leisure" (or gasp, "art"). But that admittedly ambitious enterprise



Untitled (Typewriter), c. 1920-1950s, mixed media collage on typewriter, irregular dimensions.

requires a good deal of guesswork, buttressed by artwork. To speak of Consalvos is to invoke *contexto y constancia* (context and material evidence), to speculate beyond the scant biographical details. The work speaks eloquently on its own terms, perhaps, but obstinately too, obliquely. However, an inscription on his collaged typewriter provides an apt epitaph: “FELIPE JESUS CONSALVO * BORN IN HAVANA * 1891 * CIGARMAKER, CREATOR, HEALER, & MAN.” (Even the final “s” of Consalvos is unstable; it’s an uncommon surname, possibly a corruption of a Castilian or Italian analog.) That legend of identity, typed directly onto a piece of Cognac brand cigar box edging, provides the best map for our investigation. The formula begins with biography, moving into occupational, artistic, spiritual, and philosophical facets of identity and experience, as announced by the artist himself. Our challenge is to thread that emic key through his work, biography first.

His grand-niece Helena Martí sold her “Uncle Lipe’s” oeuvre and ephemera to a collector in 1983, at a West Philadelphia garage sale.

In fact, she sold the contents of the entire garage, all of what she called the “pictures and things”: approximately 825 surviving collages on cigar box wraps, found (and family) photographs, dead letters, maps, sheet music, books, musical instruments, furniture, and other unexpected surfaces. The collector, a curator himself, held onto the boxes and bundles of collages until his retirement in 2004, when he consigned all the work to Philadelphia’s Fleisher/Ollman Gallery, where I was a curator. Shortly after the 1983 sale, Martí furnished a few further clues in a brief letter, but her uncle’s life remains elliptical and enigmatic. When our collector returned to elicit more information in 1994, she had disappeared, pronounced dead by a neighbor. The story *almost* defies belief, and subsequent collectors have tweaked it, such that a shroud of accreted—and sometimes commercially diffused—folklore surrounds an already unsteady central myth. According to Martí’s letter, Consalvos grew up on his mother’s farm outside Havana and emigrated to Miami (likely through Key West on the *S.S. Hutchinson* or the *S.S. Olivette*) in 1920 (probably not coincidentally, the year of a crippling sugar crash and a devastating economic depression). He came with his sister, his wife Eriquita Celia, and their young son José Felipe (c. 1912-1968), nicknamed “Cuco,” who later collaborated on his father’s collages as well as making his own. Felipe was 29 at the time, the same age as me when I began to trace his journey north in the summer of 2007. He worked as a *rolero* (a cigar roller) in Miami and Panama City, Florida—unpopular locations at that early date, compared to Tampa, although factories and smaller operations (known as *chinchales*) did thrive in both places—and he later lived in New York for a spell, finally settling in Philadelphia.

Every collage incorporates branded U.S.-manufactured cigar box labels, though often only as a frame; many are double-sided or sculptural; almost all incorporate excised printed text in English. Inferring from the source material and language, we can assume that all extant artwork dates to a post-immigration period, and judging from the specific labels used repeatedly—Gallatin, Samo, Bank Note—much dates to his years in the Northeast. Southeastern Pennsylvania, from Reading to Philadelphia, and to a lesser extent, New York, were cigar industry hubs during Consalvos’s lifetime, known for the manufacture of cheaper stogies and Seed and Havana brands as well as for inexpensive label printing. Some of the die-cut box wrapper labels that Consalvos favored date to the 1950’s, indicating that much of his surviving work, or at least some of its media, may date to a later era and more northerly source than previously suspected. Or per-



Untitled (An Incident in the Life of George Washington) [recto], c. 1920-1950s, mixed media collage on paper, 10 x 8 inches (FJC 294).

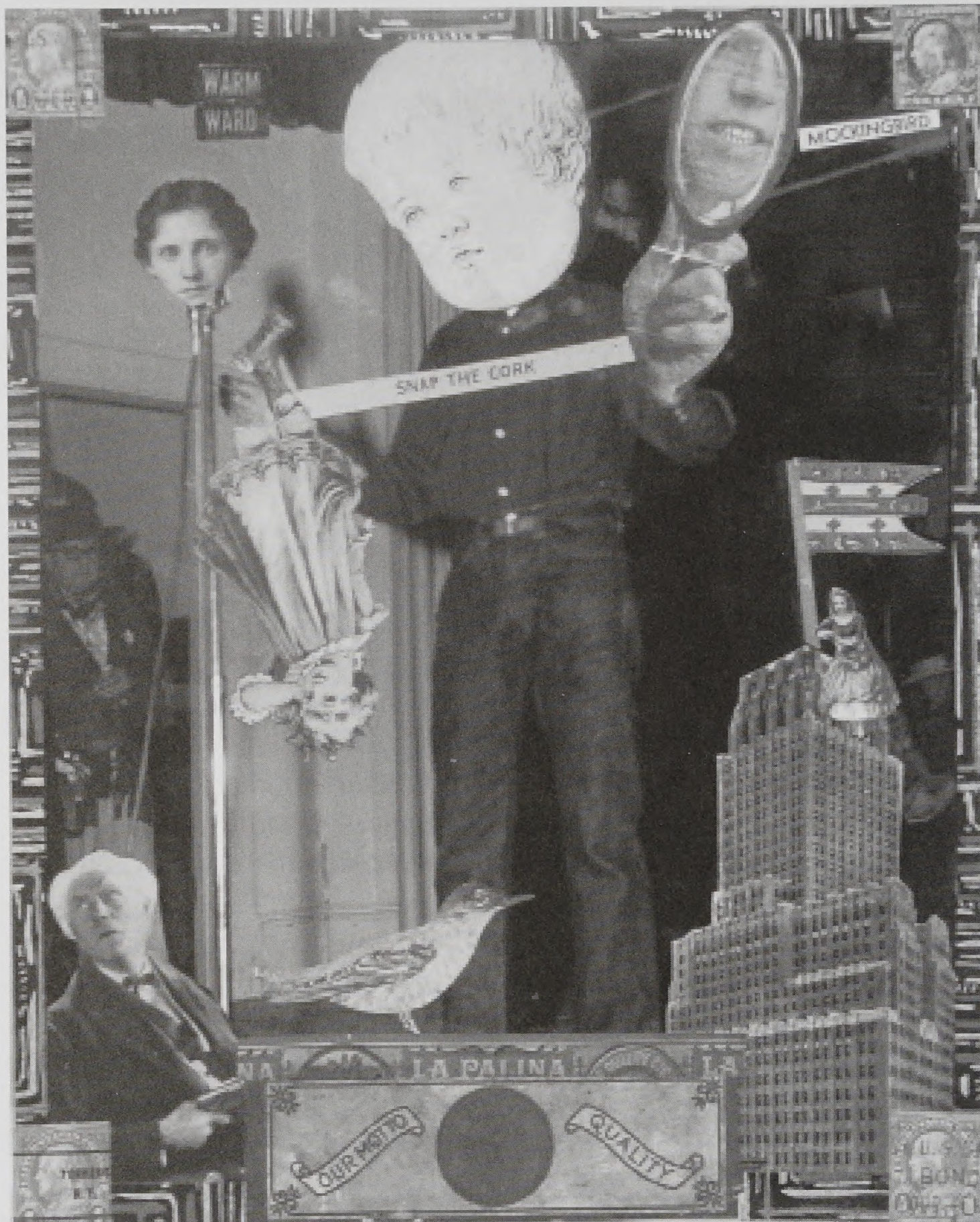
haps these were his son's contributions. What is clear is that these ribald and mischievous collages are masterpieces of thick appropriation, incorporating an astonishing breadth of published materials dating from the late 18th-century through the 1950's. Consalvos skewered the sensibilities of the print culture that flourished in his youth, much as he commented caustically on contemporary U.S.-Cuban relations by knitting his surreal, burlesque aesthetic with the historically revolutionary politics of Cuban American cigarmakers (or as Consalvos preferred, "Cubamerican," a hybrid elision of identity).

The art of cigar rolling offered both a material and conceptual source for Consalvos's other art, a means of reconfiguring and reconciling the conservative visual idiom of *tabaqueros*—the flood of nostalgic chromolithographic advertising and the hobbyist tradition of cigar-band collage—with their radical politics of unionized resistance. The American *tabaquero* culture of Consalvos's disenchanted post-Cuban independence-era generation unfolded from an even more radical and diverse parent culture, one which saw highly mobile diasporic labor communities of West African, Spanish, Italian, German, and Cuban *criollo* descent working side by side, often in

tense alliance. Key West and Tampa cigarmakers were renowned for the ferocity and frequency of their strikes and for their spirited funding and military support of *Cuba Libre*. Consummate craftsmen and women, they earned the dubious title of “labor aristocrats” (Stubbs 65) for their almost middle-class respectability, their decent wages, their mutual aid societies and social clubs, the intellectual athletics of their *tertulias* inspired by *la lectura* (the practice of factory reading), and more immediately, for the fine suits (and in many cases, dresses) they wore to work every day under their aprons.

When *tabaqueros* hired *lectores* (readers) to relieve the monotony of such repetitive, meticulous work, their preferred texts included socialist and anarcho-syndicalist tracts, leftist and labor newspapers, and classic and pulp literature. *Lectores* alternated genres—international news, Marxist texts, fiction—according to an established work-day schedule and rotation. Cigarmakers paid their readers out of their own pockets, contributing a portion of their paycheck, and they voted on the readers’ selections. *Lectors* served as orators, interpreters, professors, community leaders, and ultimate authorities on the texts—and often on many other subjects as well—but *tabaqueros* themselves elected and fired them at will and curated their own education. Cervantes, Hugo, and Dostoyevsky were perennial favorites, though his poetry scrapbooks indicate that Consalvos’s tastes were more aligned with the poets of *modernismo*, like Mexican poet Salvador Díaz Miron, Afro-Cuban bard and epigrammatist Plácido, and José Martí, the father of Cuban independence and an accomplished poet himself. But the artist’s own writing—and I’ll venture to call his cut-and-paste headlines writing—edged closer to the bombastic rants and coiled calls-to-arms of Vorticism or the visual poetry of Dadaists and Russian *zaumniki*. His texts are themselves collages, spatially and rhythmically arrayed across the surface of his works.

The Cuban American *tabaquero*’s heritage of artisanal and intellectual sovereignty was already fading by the time Consalvos was gleaning cigar bands and box labels (inners, outers, wraps, and edging) from the floors of industrialized stogie factories in Philadelphia, but it imparts a compelling context, one with which he was undoubtedly familiar. The more than 22,000 pre-WWI American cigar factories had plummeted to a mere 4000 by 1938, radically altering the American market and severely limiting the cigar band collagist’s palette. Manufacturing centers like Tampa’s Ybor City and Southeastern Pennsylvania were profoundly affected by these Depression-era drops. The Cigar Makers’ International Union, or CMIU—going strong since



Untitled (An Incident in the Life of George Washington) [verso], c. 1920-1950s, mixed media on paper, 10 x 8 inches (FJC 294).

1864—floundered in the wake of the 1919 introduction of a cigar-rolling machine and suffered from its own obstinate unwillingness to admit the growing post-WWI population of female workers. Undaunted by the waning popularity and status of cigars and cigar band collage, Consalvos negotiated his Cuban heritage and his new American home by using cigar factory scraps to frame a busy bricolage of American themes. His work conveys both an uneasy sense of place—Caribbean-American cartographic conflations and Wonderland-wor-

thy scale shifts recur as playing fields for pompous diplomats and grotesque politicians—and his struggle to articulate a translation of place, a translation that mirrored the tobacco industry's shift from Cuba to the (incrementally Northern) U.S. The political charge of the collages' content implicates the condition of American factory labor and a Cuban's corner in it. The ubiquitous labels provided him with more than formal graphic, geometric, and color consistency and symmetry.

Consalvos's work extends the *tabaquero's* spirit of critique into the realm of art. His collages extrapolate the hobbyist and hobo vernacular tradition of patriotic patterned cigar band collage to formally sophisticated, politically subversive, and sexually transgressive ends, using the body—in its political, spiritual, and medical metaphorical permutations—as a vehicle for absurdist satire, by turns hilarious and anxious. The work provocatively addresses imperialism, race, and sexuality—Hitler, blackface minstrels, gruesome *Ars Medica* anatomical illustrations, and grinning pin-ups (both beefcake and cheesecake) all make ironic appearances in various states of inversion, hybridity, or humiliation. Staccato headlines and stagy compositions at once celebrate and eviscerate the icons of American history, betraying a deep skepticism of American milk-and-honey mythology, particularly presidents. Consalvos grew up during the War of Independence and the so-called Spanish-American War, which put the Cuban tobacco industry firmly in American control, just one step in a series of exploitative military and economic interventions ranging from the 1901 Platt Amendment through occupations in 1906-9 and again in 1912, the year his son Cuco was born. So instead of the presidential honorifics of the contemporaneous cigar band collage kits plied by ladies' and scouts' journals, in Consalvos's work, George Washington persistently appears decapitated from dollar bills and dressed in drag—or else sutured onto a Frankenstein muscle-man body—and Abe Lincoln is lobotomized. Those two presidents remained perhaps the most popular North American political personages for Cubans, though Consalvos showed little respect for their images or the American currency—so invasive in the Cuban economy—that carried them. In fact, the sheer volume and frequency of their presence in his art implies a near-compulsive destruction of dollars, a paper-doll play with the presidential body around which the rest of Consalvos' oeuvre accumulates. (And indeed, an entire series is devoted to Washington dolls—dollar heads atop formally dressed female Victorian frames—inserted into reclaimed and collaged postal envelopes.)

The appropriation of cigar packaging materials exemplifies a singular departure from normative representations, a *détournement* or re-routing of the nationalist, sexist, and racist imagery endemic to the U.S. tobacco trade—imagery which, even in the 19th century, functioned via appeals to nostalgia and a distinctively bourgeois consciousness. During the American cigar-box label's 1890-1920 heyday, tobacco advertising was responsible not only for enormously popularizing the chromolithographic printing process on this side of the Atlantic, but also for developing its own distinctively wispy, nostalgic aesthetic, a decorative embellishment of Victorian realism (Harper 284). Labels occasionally portrayed *Cuba Libre*, but usually anthropomorphized as a threatened female or a child protected by Uncle Sam or Lady Liberty. American avant-garde art and design have offered little overt resistance to this smoky infiltration of idealized icons, despite—or perhaps because of—tobacciana's kitschy traffic in exoticism and deliberately “old-fashioned” tropes. Indeed, the two modes have often comfortably commingled in popular packaging design. Numerous artists have embraced or at least propagated tobacco design motifs as ironic inspiration, or as fodder for sly assessment or appropriation. From Stuart Davis' early-1920's paintings based on tobacco graphics through Richard Prince's landmark early-1980's Marlboro Man appropriation photographs, American modernists have not only been fueled by nicotine, but have responded enthusiastically to the tobacco industry's alluring (and addictive) glut of material culture.

But what is missing from this art-historical dialogue on tobacciana has been an actual tobacco laborer's perspective, someone subjectively qualified to engage in the experiential discourse of cigar production as well as consumption. In general, the phenomenology of the everyday—and in this case, the cigarmaker's role in the manufacture and dissemination of its own coded visual culture, its own stylistic mode—has been neglected or segregated from discussions of modernism. If appropriation—that civil word for stealing—is a corollary of modernity, advanced capitalism, and modern consumerism, what could a cigarmaker reveal with his or her own expressive artifacts on the subject? The cigar band collage fad of the early 20th-century makes itself conspicuous both in its absence of identifiable master practitioners and in its lack of commentary on the fraught history of its own materiality, as tangled as it is in the political and labor struggles of colonialism and industrialization.

Consalvos directly addressed this lack of critical engagement through the political potentialities of collage, a technique native to



Untitled (The Marauders Are Coming) [recto and verso], c. 1920-1950s, mixed media collage, artist's frame, 39 x 21 inches (FJC 587).

vernacular tradition, but historicized within the dominant discourse of modernist perceptual revolutions. The role of collage in the development of European and American “academic” modernism—from Cubism and Dada through Pop, and still flourishing digitally and otherwise—has been well-established. Splicing and pasting allowed startling formal and conceptual reconfigurations to emerge in visual art, literary, and cinematic discourses, appropriationist parallaxes that dissected and analyzed photography and other materials of modernity. But these “modernist” changes were likewise occurring at subaltern levels, outside galleries and museums and inside private homes and the industrial workplace. In that sense, the twentieth-century rise of collage was a recursive development within both vernacular and elite or academic material cultural responses to the explosion of print media. Cigar band collage, like related contemporaneous traditions of accumulation and commemoration—Victorian scrapbook “albums,” crazy quilts, and memory jugs, for instance—tended to



Untitled (Turn Back the Universe) [detail], c. 1920-1950s, mixed media collage on paper, 33 x 25 inches (FJC 642).

remain a domestic and anonymous practice, a quiet appropriative analog to modernist noise. Consalvos furnishes but one example of vernacular modernism, bridging the artificial dichotomy between “academic” and “vernacular” realms of expressive culture and offering an epistemic mend, or nexus, for the folklorist and cultural/art historian.

Merging the biting socio-political satire and absurdist impulse of Dadaists like Hannah Höch (1898-1978) and Max Ernst (1891-1976) with the abstruse, nostalgic mysticism of Joseph Cornell (1903-1972) and Jess (aka Burgess Collins, 1923-2004), Consalvos parallels and prefigures developments in Dada, Surrealist, and Pop collage. (And he used Campbell’s Soup cans long before Warhol.) Though apparently self-taught and never exhibited during his lifetime—there is no evidence that Consalvos ever showed his artwork to anyone outside his circle of family and friends—Consalvos’s collages catch and outpace similar stuff by renowned masters like John Heartfield (1891-1968) and Richard Hamilton (b. 1922). A careful comparison with the work of other strikingly similar modernist collagists—Raoul Hausmann (1886-1971), Kurt Schwitters (1887-1948), Georges Hugnet (1906-1974), and Eduardo Paolozzi (1924-2005), for example—can demonstrate how Consalvos employed a vernacular craft tradition, a modest and short-lived fad, to explore issues central to Euro-American and Caribbean modernity, thereby stridently straddling the falsely divided strains of modernism and exposing their braided nature.

Art historians have enshrined all those great artists as arbiters of –isms, partially and implicitly according to arbitrary qualifications of

training, education, and, let's face it, male Euro-American whiteness. But Consalvos's job as a *rolero* would have uniquely prepared him for the cuts and folds of his extraordinary collages, most of which feature several dense layers of interwoven, slit-inserted, and wheat-pasted material. I've watched with fascination the stained hands of *roleros*, clutching their keen *chavetas*², dance over the fragrant, moist tobacco leaf and then deftly wrap the reshaped *capa*³ around the binder in one graceful gesture. The vegetable-gum glue they still use to seal their cigars and the constant, intuitive, tapped-out cutting—repetitive strain injuries in the wrists and hands were a constant source of pain for cigarmakers—conjure Consalvos: might he have used these very skills and tools in his intricately constructed collages? Beneath the political and pop-cultural sedimentation of Consalvos's practice lies another stratum, one which I don't have time or space to tease out here. Might this self-described "healer," who his great-niece claimed could "make medicine with the help of God," and whose pasted-poems repeatedly reference magic and magicians, have used his *chaveta* to conjure or cure (via *Santería*, spiritualism, or herbalism) as well as to lacerate and layer American cultural tropes? In the witty words of his own typical headlines, that would make the "Paper Wedding" of his collages a "First Premium Alchemy" indeed.

Psychoanalysis's most famous bit of folklore may be apocryphal, but it's certainly pungent: when asked about the psychological implications of his fondness for phallic cigars, Freud supposedly retorted, "Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar." René Magritte's overhyped 1928 pipe parry notwithstanding, sometimes a cigar signifies much, much more than its suggestive shape or its myriad representations. Sometimes a cigar suggests revolution.⁴ Consalvos combined two revolutions—aesthetic and socialist—in his peculiarly plaited careers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Before the UNC Folklore Colloquium, I presented a version of this paper—itself a capsule version of my M.A. thesis—at the joint annual conference of the American Folklore Society and the Association Canadienne d'Ethnologie et de Folklore in Québec, Canada, on October 19, 2007. My research was made possible in part by funding from the Center for the Study of the American South and the Archie Green Occupational Folklife Fellowship. I'd also like to thank AFS for their Student Travel Stipend, the UNC Graduate School for their travel aid, and especially the Fleisher/Ollman Gallery for their

ongoing support, without which this project would have guttered long ago. If you have any information about Felipe Jesus Consalvos or his collages, please contact me at greaves@post.harvard.edu.

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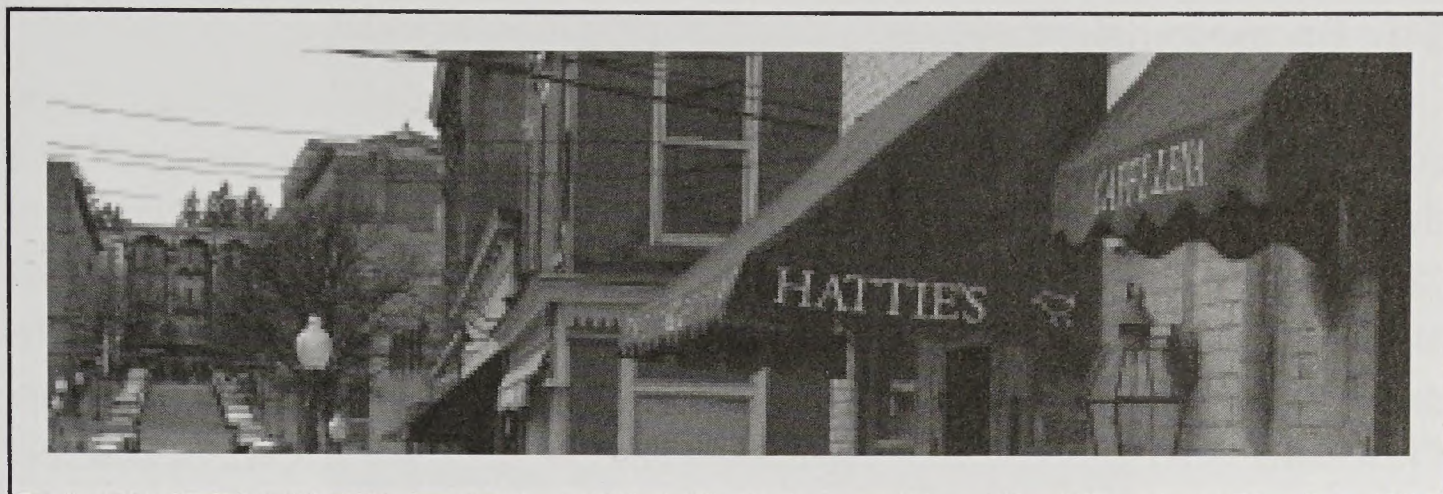
NOTES

¹ José Martí spoke of his years spent in the U.S. as living "inside the monster... to know its entrails" (Pérez 494).

² Used to slice tobacco leaves, the *chaveta* (literally, "pin, key, or forelock") was the *rolero's* knife, primary tool, and source of pride, a kind of razor-sharp crescent-shaped blade without a handle.

³ *Capas* are cigar wrapper leaves.

⁴ Cuban American cigarmakers were so implicated in revolutionary politics that the original orders of insurrection for the Cuban War of Independence arrived in Cuba from Tampa rolled inside a cigar.



Lena's Legacy: The Lasting Power of Caffé Lena, America's Oldest Continuously Running Folk Coffeehouse

By Jocelyn Arem

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WELCOME TO CAFFÉ LENA

Welcome to Caffé Lena, America's oldest continuously running coffeehouse. Imagine that it's August 2005. Utah Phillips and the Rose Tattoo have just played a homecoming show. Upstairs, behind the scenes, where volunteers, patrons, and Caffé board members alike have gathered, Utah and the gang find their way into the kitchen for a piece of pie and suddenly break into song:

Angeline the baker
Angeline the baker
Angeline, Angeline
Angeline the baker!

Jocelyn Arem is a musician, activist, and Caffé Lena's official historian. She holds a BA in Ethnomusicology from Skidmore College and an MA in Folklore with a Certificate in Cultural Studies from UNC Chapel Hill. Arem initiated the Caffé Lena History Project in 2002 to expand public awareness of Caffé Lena's history and cultural significance. She is currently writing a book on the history of Caffé Lena and its impact on America's musical heritage, which she hopes to publish by the Caffé's fiftieth anniversary in 2010.

Frame photograph: Entrance to Caffé Lena. Photo © 2008 Jocelyn Arem.

THE BEGINNINGS OF A STORY...

Six years ago, I was a college student in Saratoga Springs, New York. I had just picked up a guitar, and begun to write songs. One day I decided to play an open mic at a little place downtown they called Caffé Lena. All I had heard about the Caffé were the legendary tales told around town, the folklore surrounding the place. People used to say, "That's the place where Don McLean wrote American Pie!" and "Oh yeah, Caffé Lena, Bob Dylan played there." I started hanging out, meeting musicians, and volunteering at shows. A year later I played my first gig at the Caffé.

On my many visits to the Caffé, I began to look around, and wonder about the history of the place where "Bob Dylan played." The feeling of the room, its old brick walls, musty floors and dimly lit stage, the smell of coffee and pastries wafting from the kitchen, the sense of history that I could never quite explain, was always palpable. It became clear to me that there was much more to this place than it being just one of Dylan's stopping points.

In 2002, with support from the board of Caffé Lena, the Saratoga Springs History Museum, and, in later years, working with the American Folklife Center, I initiated the Caffé Lena History Project and an ethnographic fieldwork project to document the story of the renowned coffeehouse whose legendary reputation had brought me to its doors. Through the Masters degree program in Folklore at UNC Chapel Hill, I began to explore the evolution and impact of Caffé Lena as a vehicle for cultural transmission, examining its existence and growth within the realm of American folk cultural production and its participation in the countercultural movement of the 1960s.

Born out of the 1960s folk revival, the Caffé appeared at exactly the right place and time to provide support for traditional and emergent musical expression that fused art, culture, and social action. The history of the Caffé is a fascinating set of connections between one woman, one city, and many artists who proceeded to galvanize our nation. In over just half a century, Caffé Lena has become an internationally renowned music venue. This small coffeehouse has had a profound and long lasting influence on the American musical scene.

COFFEEHOUSES: A HISTORY OF SPACES FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION

The social traditions of coffeehouses date from the fifteenth century, when in the Middle East they were social gathering places. By the eighteenth century in Europe they had become centers of political activity where people could talk over coffee and exchange ideas. Given Lena Spencer's Italian name—Pasqualina Rosa—and her Ital-



Caffé Lena Coffee. Photo © 2008 Jocelyn Arem.

ian heritage, it is interesting to note that the first coffeehouse proprietor in 1652 London (who also started the first coffeehouse in Paris twenty years later in 1672) was named Pasqua Rosée and was a native of Ragusa, Italy. Rosée, the servant of a Turkish merchant, had been brought to London to open the city's first coffeeshop. Built on Rosée's example, the London coffeeshop provided a place where men could gather together, read newspapers, smoke pipes, drink coffee, and abide by strict rules of social conduct that promoted equality among all men and forbid quarreling and swearing.

Though the early coffeehouses promoted “equality,” it is important to point out that they also excluded women. Sociologist Ray Oldenburg (232) notes domestic responsibility as one reason why perhaps women did not initially find the coffeehouse a welcome setting, “...Women’s gatherings have not afforded the abandonment of men’s. Being eternally ‘on duty,’ women have been far less inclined to drink alcoholic beverages, get rowdy, or stray far from the domestic setting and its responsibilities.” However, coffeehouses during the American folk revival allowed women such as Lena to not only become part of coffeehouse culture but to run coffeehouses themselves.

In 1935, an Italian named Dominick Parisi opened the first Italian-American style coffeehouse in New York City. In her encyclopedia of folk music, former Caffé Lena patron Kristin Baggelaar’s entry for the term “coffeehouse” reads:

The concept of the coffeehouse is British in origin. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the coffeehouse functioned as a club in which clientele of the same occupation or professional interests congregated with bankers, sailors, and writers enjoying their own exclusive establishments. The coffeehouse was introduced to the United States in the eighteenth century, but it was not until Dominick Parisi opened the Caffé Reggio in Greenwich Village in 1935 that the American venture was firmly established. His imported espresso machine was a novelty which lured customers to gather, play Checkers, and chat in a warm and friendly atmosphere. (Baggelaar and Milton 79)

Lena Spencer was well aware of the social history into which her Caffé fit. She reiterated Kristin Baggelaar’s explanation of the coffeehouse as a place where people gathered and which featured the espresso that Dominick Parisi had introduced as an inviting element of this space in the early 1930s. From her Italian American roots Lena was already familiar with espresso (she later swapped Checkers for her personal favorite, Scrabble) and offered other Italian drinks, desserts, and pastries in her coffeehouse. She wrote:

Of course the term coffeehouse should be defined in terms pertinent to the past 35 years or so. If you mean coffeehouse as a place where you go to have coffee and donuts maybe a piece of pie or a hamburger or a ham and cheese sandwich or the like, a place that might have a counter with stools, a grill behind it for hamburgers or hot dogs, a girl or guy behind doubling as server and short-order cook, a place that some people refer to as a “greasy spoon”, that’s not what we mean. As a matter of fact even those places have joined the ranks of endangered species. Actually what coffeehouse means in this con-

text is the places that sprang up in the late fifties what were meant to be patterned after the coffeehouses of the 18th-century in England, known as penny universities where the literati of the day gathered to exchange ideas, talk about their work, meet with their peers; A nice concept that worked in some places. They became places where bohemians (later referred to as “beatniks”) gathered to recite their abstract poetry—some good, some pure schlock—to the accompaniment of jazz. The early coffeehouses were dark and exhibited abstract art and served espresso coffees and were hangouts for the bohemian intelligentsia. They sprang up on various parts of the country: San Francisco’s North Beach, L.A.’s suburb of Venice, Chicago’s Old Town, N.Y.C.’s Greenwich Village and other major cities. (Spencer 1)

By describing coffeehouses as hangouts for the “bohemian intelligentsia,” Lena reveals her fascination with those aspects of the beat movement—an acceptance of and lenience for those with untraditional lifestyles and marginalized identities including all walks of artists, writers, musicians and actors—with whom she identified. These aspects speak to much larger issues of the 1950s coffeehouse evolving as a space that catered to those with unorthodox or anti-establishment political viewpoints.

In the coffeehouse setting, and in Lena’s Caffé in particular, those viewpoints would be expressed in the dress, song choices, and political beliefs of performers and audience, and in Lena’s own role as a female business owner. Lena took over the Caffé in 1962 when the women’s movement had only begun to gain headway in America. Unlike Pasqua Rosée, Pasqualina Rosa (better known as Lena Spencer) represented as a woman a radically new kind of Italian American head of household and coffeehouse owner.

Lena was radical in the fact that she did not stray from the domestic sphere, she simply brought the domestic sphere with her. Lena’s life is a story about one woman’s defiant struggle for acceptance and her search for a space to create a radically new home in a place that found itself caught in the changing tides of cultural tastes and political ties. Lena and many others found not only refuge but a home in her Caffé.

LENA: THE “MOTHER OF FOLK MUSIC”

Lena Spencer, the Caffé’s namesake and founder, was born in 1923 in Milford, Massachusetts to Italian immigrants. As a young girl, Lena worked as a waitress in her father’s Italian restaurant, where she learned the art of hospitality. (Lena’s Italian recipes later became famous, and she was known at her eponymous Caffé for making visitors feel as if they were being welcomed home.)

In 1958, Lena, an aspiring actress, married Bill Spencer, a student at the Boston Museum School of Fine Arts. In 1960, Lena and Bill Spencer opened Caffé Lena as a money-making venture, thinking it would make them enough to retire in Europe. Lena and Bill originally chose Saratoga Springs, New York as the perfect spot for the Caffé because of its close location to Skidmore College. They capitalized on the countercultural youth movement, which found its voice in folk music during the early 1960s. The city of Saratoga Springs has honored Lena's contributions throughout the years. In 1987, it renamed its own Hamilton Alley "Lena Lane." On March 15, 1989, Lena was honored with the Saratoga Arts Council's first lifetime achievement award, and an honorary degree from Skidmore College. Over the years there have been over seven Lena Spencer Days recognized by the city of Saratoga Springs.

After two years, Bill Spencer left and Lena ran the Caffé alone, with the help of her "extended family" of volunteers and helpers. Beginning with Lena's sensibilities as a hostess and patron of the arts, Caffé Lena has a longstanding tradition of showcasing up-and-coming young artists and supporting non-commercial music. Lena wrote:

I have never allowed myself to succumb to the money-making attitudes of music clubs who insist that the artists they engage must be established in the field with national reputations and best-selling albums. The incentive to carry on has been the awareness of the Caffé's importance to the folk performers who have a place to share their rare talents, to appreciative audiences and the importance to the audience to have a place to come to that is not steeped in the brash commercialism of a dollars-and-cents oriented business culture. (Spencer 1)

THE LEGACY

Sarah Craig, Caffé Lena's current manager remarked, "Caffé Lena could not keep roots music alive all on its own. There needs to be a nationwide network of strong, excellent venues where people can share their art." Since the 1960s, intimate listening rooms like the Caffé Lena in New York, the Club Passim in Massachusetts, the Ark in Michigan, the Freight and Salvage in California, and others have all played a central role in the politics and music of American culture. Not only are these places essential institutions in their own small communities, but they are also of great national importance because American folk music is shaped and disseminated within their walls. A



View of Caffé Lena and Phila Street. Photo © 2008 Jocelyn Arem.

few of these places have adapted to the changing music scene, and continue to beckon new life into their deep corners and darkened stages. They continue to exist because of performers' desire to share their stories and songs with an audience, as well as because of the dedication of certain individuals whose aim is to sustain the spirit of their communities. This is the legacy of Lena and her Caffé.

Nearly fifty years since its inception, what began as the business scheme of two struggling artists has become a site of national interest. Michael Taft, Head of the Archive of Folk Culture at the Library of Congress, wrote:

The Center has long been interested in the history and development of the American folksong revival movement. The Caffé Lena Collection, as one of the prime collections of its kind, fills in one of the missing pieces in this history—the role of coffee houses and clubs in the folksong revival. For this reason it holds special interest for us. The Center also has a personal connection with the Caffé, since its present Director, Peggy Bulger, and its former head of the archives, Joe Hickerson have performed there. (Taft)

Folk music is central to America's understanding of itself. From Woody Guthrie's working class anthems to Bruce Springsteen's inter-



Utah Phillips & the Rose Tattoo play music in the Caffé Kitchen. Photo
© 2005 Jocelyn Arem

pretation of ballads about folk heroes to the collaboration between Utah Phillips and Ani DiFranco on *Fellow Workers*, we see the lasting impact of this American art form. Places like Caffé Lena created the bridge for folk traditions to move into the country's collective consciousness. Through Caffé Lena we can see the impact of the folk coffeehouse as a major cultural agent and disseminator. From the Caffé Lena website:

And the list grew and grew, to eventually include thousands of musicians, poets, storytellers and actors. Through weekly forays into the vibrant folk scene of Greenwich Village, and regular dialogue with the leading folklorists of the day, Lena brought to her tiny upstate club the most sought after artists on the scene, plus some daring newcomers who interpreted the folk tradition in whole new ways. She chose so wisely that word of her club and munificent personality traveled far and wide, and it wasn't long before a big family of music lovers gathered around her, permanently placing Saratoga Springs on the map of American Folk Music. Since Lena's passing in 1989, the booking and management of the club has continued to reflect Lena's core principals of generosity, dedication to kindness above profit, respect for our inherited folk culture, and support for new

spins on old traditions. The Caffè Lena stage is still hailed as one of the warmest and most welcoming to artists who are creating quality art outside the confines of the commercial music industry.

A few of the important performers in the Caffé's history include Mississippi John Hurt, Arlo Guthrie, Odetta, and Don McLean. John Hurt first recorded in 1928 and saw no commercial success from his efforts. His record, however, became well known, though many new fans assumed he was dead. He was surprised to find, in 1963, that his work had influenced blues musicians around the world and made him a legendary figure. He played the Newport Folk Festivals of 1963 and 1964 and graced the stage at Caffé Lena with one of his last concerts before his death in 1966. In 1967, at the Newport Folk Festival, Arlo Guthrie premiered "Alice's Restaurant" and instantly stepped out of the long shadow cast by his father, Woody Guthrie. Arlo and Lena were very close friends and he has played several benefits and shows at the Caffé.

Odetta became nationally famous in 1959 when Harry Belafonte featured her on his television special. In 1999 President Clinton awarded her the National Medal for Arts and Humanities. Legend credits Odetta's records with inspiring Janis Joplin to start singing blues and a teenaged Bob Dylan to trade his electric guitar for an acoustic model. Odetta played the Caffé from 1985 until 2002. Don McLean's "American Pie" was a number-one hit in 1972 and then again in 2000 when Madonna recorded it. Don Mclean was a close friend to Lena and a regular at the Caffé in the years before American Pie. During the height of his fame he performed more than one benefit for Lena (Adler 2005).

COUNTER-CULTURE COFFEE: TODAY'S COFFEEHOUSE CULTURE

In 1989, Lena suffered a fall at the Caffé and passed away, leaving the Caffé to be run by a board of directors, who registered the Caffé as a non-profit organization. Today, in addition to independent coffeehouses, there has been a rise of coffee chains like Starbucks that copied early American coffeehouses like Caffé Lena, and co-opted their counter-cultural elements to create a new kind of sophisticated mainstream cafe. With Starbucks, we now have second-hand imitators, places that put forward nostalgic reminiscences of the traditions Lena propagated. In cities across the country, the American public sees a replica of the values Lena put forth.

We now have Dylan, the folk musician who I always heard had played at Caffé Lena in the 1960s, now "performing" at Starbucks,

the new, corporate coffeehouse. Dylan's protest songs made him the figurehead of the anti-establishment movement that defined America during the 1960s. But now counterculture legend Bob Dylan is facing accusations of selling out because he signed an exclusive deal to sell his CDs at Starbucks (Wilson). The legacy of the coffeehouse is threatened by today's corporate coffeehouse, where a sense of belonging is replaced by stolen and homogenized coffeehouse "atmosphere." Hip hop artist and Caff  performer Baba Israel notes that the Caff 's larger presence, its familiarity and its unique identity as the oldest continuously running coffeehouse, gives it its ultimate sense of purpose:

It's a place centered on the culture of the place...that's what makes it familiar, it's not just a venue where somebody said, "how can we make some money?" That's not what's going on here. You can feel the difference. It's in everybody that's here. Everyone is invested in what's happening. Unfortunately that's becoming more and more rare. As we see venues that are run by homogenizing every aspect of our culture, from strip malls to the venues we have to big chains or places in New York like BB Kings, which is a great venue but there's no sense of who's running it or its purpose. It's rare when you feel a venue has its own culture and it's not just what's happening on that night. I appreciate being in those places; this is one of them. I think people are aware of it on a national level and probably international as well. It's local, but has a larger presence from what I can tell. (3)

In today's increasingly globalized environment, with the World Wide Web and corporate power gaining mass attention and pervading all aspects of our lives, including where we spend our time among members of our communities, Caff  Lena stands out as a site for local, intimate, independent music and culture. Gruning (xv) writes, "To be sure, popular dissatisfaction with the global and the return to...localism resonates in terms of today's folk 'community'." The fact that Caff  Lena is still in existence in the face of the corporate coffeehouses springing up all around it shows the lasting influence of this small but tremendously important cultural landmark.

THE POWER OF LEGEND: FOLKLORE'S CULTURAL CAPITAL

Lena's survival instincts are responsible for the Caff 's ability to evolve and adapt in an increasingly globalized atmosphere. From its beginnings as the outgrowth of her need for a home away from home for a generation of artists looking for the comfort and support of this environment, its reputation grew exponentially until it became a



Utah Phillips and Caffé Lena volunteer in Caffé Lena kitchen. Photo © 2005 Jocelyn Arem.

legacy in its own right. Gruning describes, “Yet there were die-hard coffeehouses as well, the proprietors of which were more concerned with beat idealism than the politics of image that threatened to consume them” (Gruning 105). Caffé Lena stood the test of time, and now, ironically, its story is a salable commodity. The Caffé today not only sells tickets to concerts, but also T-shirts, CDs, even its own brand of coffee. The city of Saratoga Springs lists it in its brochures. Kristin Baggelaar notes this recognition in her encyclopedia under the term “coffeehouse:”

The folk boom was the heyday of coffeehouses, which were scattered throughout the country but within a matter of a few years the majority of them shut down...with the advent of commercial folk music, many coffeehouses were abandoned for concert halls and larger folk clubs, which are capable of accommodating more people and making more money. Today, the role of the coffeehouse is more modest, tending to the preservation and presentation of traditional folk music, as exemplified by the oldest coffeehouse in America, Caffé Lena. (Baggelaar and Milton 79)



Lena Spencer bust by Sharon Boyd. Photo © 2008 Jocelyn Arem.

In Baggelaar's opinion, the Caffé's legacy is one of preservation and continued presentation of traditional music in spite of the rise of commercial folk music that relegated many of its predecessors and contemporary venues to the netherworld of folk music. Even in the 1970s Lena pondered the beginnings of the Caffé as a commercial enterprise and why her Caffé should continue to exist even after it became well known as an idealistic venue focused on the growth of artists:

It all started as a means to make money—not for mercenary ends but as a means towards a goal. Whose goal? Who can say. “We’ll make enough money in one year to finance at least five years in Europe.” Enough money to pay for materials and housing and food and comfort and I’ll create great works for only in Europe can these things be done. Europe—where the artist is respected—looked up to—revered. Only in Europe can I find recognition—that was the reason—the initial reason...Even now...when people say to me that they have heard of the Caffé Lena in far flung corners of everywhere I find it so hard to believe and it fills me with the warmest and most wonderful feelings. I ask myself why? How come? And people ask me to what do I attribute the long-lastingness of the Caffé which to the best of my knowledge, is the longest running coffee house with a continually running policy of presenting folk music. (Spencer)



Dominic Parisi and his Espresso-Italian rapid-coffee-making machines

Coffee - America loves it and makes it many ways

THE United States drinks more coffee than any other nation in the world. "Let's have coffee and talk it over" is an expression familiar to any businessman. In New York's Greenwich Village, Dominic Parisi proudly presides over the Cafe Reggio, where no food is sold—only coffee, and coffee made in a way unfamiliar to most Americans. Dominic's Espresso machine is a shining Gargantua equipped with many spigots, filled with hot water and steam, which makes a cup of coffee in just about three seconds. Dominic spent his life savings of \$1,000 to import the Espresso from Italy. Only he is allowed to touch it. He rubs it with loving care. With it he makes a cup of strong black coffee or of Cappuccino (a marvelous blend of strong coffee, steaming milk and cinnamon). Real coffee lovers haunt his cafe. They are all "my friends" to Dominic, who never takes his hat off because, "Excuse me—it makes me sneeze." A visit to the Cafe Reggio is an experience worth having, but if you can't go, here are the ways you can brew coffee at home in handsome modern makers.

Article: Dominic Parisi. From Caffé Reggio Website:
www.caffereggio.com.

She answered her own question years later when she began to explore the Caffé's place among the capitalistic venues that focused on profit first and the artist second. Lena's priorities earned her a respected place in the folk world, a legacy to be remembered and used for the Caffé's purposes to continue its longstanding tradition, and its national reputation. She wrote:

It has not been easy to keep the Caffé together and it has been beset with its share of hardship, financial struggle, disappointments and sometimes disillusion...The coffeehouse should be a showcase for deserving artists as well as established musicians. Educate your audiences to expect the best in musical talent, familiar or unfamiliar, and always be governed by the dictates of good taste. (Spencer)

TODAY'S CAFFÉ

The "On Wednesday Emerging Artist Series," created by Board President Stanley McGaughey in the 1990s, took the concept of inclusiveness and social equality one step further by allowing local youth to book and produce their own shows at Caffé Lena. This program gave the Caffé's guests and "extended family" increased ownership of the activities at the Caffé and allowed them to play a key role in shaping the future of the Caffé. The shape of the Caffé's past, however, is continually adapting to the present through the telling of its story to new audiences. Sarah Craig, Caffé Lena's current manager remarked to me:

Artists and listeners of today deeply value the history of Caffé Lena, as a connection to the culture and spirit that drew them to non-commercial music in the first place, and as a validation that the music has been important to America for a long time.

This year the Caffé celebrates its 48th birthday at the same location on 47 Phila Street that it has occupied since its inception in 1960. Caffé Lena will soon begin a campaign to renovate its historic building and make it handicapped accessible. The Caffé's former board president Torey Adler (2007) says, "It is important to me that we pass on what we know about Lena's Caffé in a way that endures over the years, and that people who were close to Lena stay close to the Caffé. I always hope that Lena would approve of how we carry on her tradition. There is a heart to Caffé Lena. If it stopped, we would all know."

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The Punt Block Heard 'Round the World: Spectacle, Festival, and Ritual in New Orleans Saints Football

By Katherine Doss

After Hurricane Katrina devastated numerous communities in and around New Orleans, forcibly ejecting their members, people were desperate to locate one another. Disoriented and dismayed, New Orleanians were scattered about the country. As a New Orleans resident, I shared in this experience. While we could not necessarily be together in one community, people searched for symbols we shared, things that bound us together beyond the experience of tragedy. We longed for the cuisine, music, landscape, and recreation that we identify as uniquely ours. When it was possible, many returned to the city to re-inhabit it and begin the long process of revitalization. While the culture slowly began to re-emerge, the community was sorely missing a key element, the New Orleans Saints NFL football team. The team had been displaced, relocated for an entire season to San Antonio, and like many citizens there were ominous signs that the franchise might never return.

Throughout the United States football is more than just a game. Many, especially Southerners, recognize how this sport enjoys an ex-

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Frame photo: End zone shot of the Saints' field. Photo by Katherine Doss.

alted role in the support and formation of their communities. Furthermore, and this will be surprising to a number of you, it is appropriate and legitimate for football to have this role. A game that took place between New Orleans and Atlanta, two of the South's historic cities, in a time of grand crisis for one of them, can explain and illustrate this phenomenon.

Nearly a month after the first anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans welcomed its prodigal football team back to the city. On the evening of Monday, September 25, 2006, the Saints were greeted by over 70,000 fans at their home stadium, the Superdome. Their return and the re-opening of the Superdome served as a testament to the night's significance. One year before, the Superdome had been a symbol of destruction and misery, but now it was renewed and ready for action.

Within two minutes of the start of the game, Steve Gleason blocked a punt against the Atlanta Falcons deep in their end zone, which led to a touchdown. According to Gleason, who I interviewed later, out of the seventeen hundred punts kicked each year in the NFL, only fifteen or sixteen are blocked. Furthermore, there are eight teammates trying to block the punt each time, but only one succeeds. However, if a player blocks a punt, the odds that his team will win the game increase to eighty-five percent. Considering the circumstances, the Falcons did not stand a chance. The crowd went wild and New Orleanians everywhere were beside themselves with joy. The Saints went on to beat Atlanta, 23-3, in what certainly will be remembered as a historic event for the city and savored as a true moment of victory for its people. The whole nation appreciated what New Orleanians felt that night and the media gave it its full due. The game later won ESPN's Espy Award for "Best Moment" in sports.

FOLKLORE AND FOOTBALL

Professional football is recognized in our country as a consummate American pastime, prominent in the hearts of many. Scholars, although not pointing specifically to American football, help us to understand such symbolically potent athletic events by viewing them as spectacle, festival, and ritual. Frank E. Manning refers to John MacAloon's identification of the Olympics as, "a game (an agonistic contest among national opponents), a rite (a solemn consecration of a human unit aimed at symbolizing the ideal of world community), a festival (a joyous celebration of unity, cooperation, accomplishment, and excellence), and a spectacle (a grandiloquent display

of imagery evoking a diffuse sense of wonderment and awe)” (Manning 294). While not global in scope like the Olympics, the function and purposes that Saints football serves in New Orleans can be applied similarly. The game is experienced as a combination of athletic competition, skilled performance, and seasonal community celebration, all with an air of pageantry that makes it unforgettable, particularly in New Orleans.

These three theoretical frameworks of spectacle, festival, and ritual all point to elements of football that expand our understanding of it beyond that of mere sport. The application of these three models helps to discern the meaning of the game at the Superdome on September 25, 2006. In various ways each model points to the same, or at least compatible and similar, insights. My consultants are Steve Gleason, the member of the Saints Special Teams who blocked the famous punt at the game’s outset, and Mary Beth Romig, the Director of Public Relations for the New Orleans Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau. Gleason gives us a participant’s eye-view of the experience of being at the center of the game. He has long been a favorite of the fans for his leadership on the team and for his community involvement. Romig is a life-long member of the New Orleans community and also is part of a celebrated family, known for its active participation in the culture. She has a keen knowledge of New Orleans and a passion for its revitalization.

SPECTACLE

According to Manning, spectacles are large-scale cultural productions that revolve around a dynamic event. Spectacles draw large crowds. They are grandiose, public displays that comprise the event itself and other attractions including, as Manning (293) states, “pomp and pageantry, parading and partying, [and] sideshows of all kinds – including crowd behavior.” Based on the variation of the performance exhibited, spectacles can inspire such responses from the audience as awe, curiosity, or, if carried out poorly, dissatisfaction. They provide an opportunity for people to assemble, become participants or observers, and be entertained in a symbolic context.

From all accounts, the day leading up to the Saints game felt like a holiday, building toward a climatic spectacle. Most businesses closed early in anticipation, granting their employees ample time to prepare for the pre-game rituals. Concerts and tailgating began as early as 4:00 p.m., as hundreds of thousands of people arrived at the Superdome awaiting its grand re-opening. Romig reported to me in



Steve Gleason (37) on the sidelines of a Saints game. Photo by Katherine Doss.

a phone conversation that people were walking around town clicking their heels with enthusiasm. The mood of the city was one of excitement and expectation. Later Romig recalled,

The spirit of the night: unbelievable. The Saints selling out the Dome: unbelievable. People happy. I was walking through the Dome before the game and groups of people—black, white, young, old, men, women, children—were just screaming at the top of their lungs to be back in the Dome . . . To hear 70,000 sing the National Anthem all at one time with gusto with Irma Thomas who sang it pure and didn't riff, didn't do any of those shenanigans that they do. People were singing and crying.

The stadium swelled with spectators coming to see their team perform. Many whose homes had flooded and whose jobs were lost were dedicated to being at that game because when their team gathered, they gathered. For New Orleanians, there was a sense in which a victory by the team signaled success for the city. Spirits, already high, would be lifted up even further with a win. The Saints symbolized a modicum of hope amidst the din of skepticism about the city's future.

At the time, the fans did not know whether their team would be performing well or not, considering the turnover in players and coaches. They certainly did not know that the turning point of the game would occur immediately after its start, in the rare and dramatic form of a blocked punt. When Gleason blocked the punt not two minutes into the game, he accomplished something momentous, both for himself and for the city of New Orleans. Speaking to that personal realization, he said,

I think after I blocked the punt and was running around, my brain luckily turned on and said, "Hey. Whoa. Check this out right now. Check out what just happened and what's happening right now." So, I just fell down and was sitting there looking around and just feeling this joy, this energy. There's no doubt that if you could bottle that up, if you could bottle up that energy, you could power a city for years. The energy that people were creating had combusted at that point.

With a score on the board, the crowd exploded. America witnessed a transformation in the spirit of New Orleans that night. Romig encountered an ESPN newscaster in the elevator after the game who said that it was as if the people, for the first time since the hurricane, had a ticket to scream. These were joyous screams, a chance to release the spectrum of emotions circulating through the Superdome. The spectacle became internalized. No one there could simply be an observer. As the crowd realized that Gleason was closing in on the ball and might block the punt, that play became something that the fans participated in with awe. Disbelief gave way to faith, faith to joy, and joy into an explosion of mass hysteria.

FESTIVAL

Festivals are about celebration, expression, identification, and transformation. Festivals are public events anchored in the expression of group identity. Beverly J. Stoeltje (261), in her essay on festivals, describes them as, "participatory in ethos, complex in structure, and multiple in voice, scene, and purpose." Because festivals serve a communal function, they provide a greater collective self-understanding while simultaneously offering individuals a chance to perform and display their particular set of proclivities and talents. According to Stoeltje, contextual symbols identifying the group are communicated through displays, such as costume, language, and music. Inevitable social interactions imply active participation from both the performers and the attendees. Of the diversity of social interests rep-



The endzone in the New Orleans Superdome. Photo by Katherine Doss.

resented within the group, “[b]oth men and women will have roles, the young and the old attend, outsiders and insiders alike have spaces accorded to them, and the rich and the poor walk on the same ground (though not necessarily together)” (Stoeltje 266).

As the community gathers and forms into a whole, all who are a part feel that they have their special role and that their participation is important. At a Saints game, each spectator knows that they make a difference and that it is their responsibility to support and thus elicit the very best from the players on the field. Many, perhaps a majority, also know that they attend the event to entertain one another. The spectators dance in their seats and stand and dance between plays and during time outs. They dance with one another and for others to enjoy as the crowd looks around to see who is performing. They wear festive outfits that show their unique personality and special commitments to players and to the community, and they strut about taking pleasure in what each other wears. They invent festive antics. They eat festive food and drink the alcoholic beverages that are special to their culture. They are themselves the festivity, a community on display.

Stoeltje distinguishes festival from ritual in its emphasis on play and pastime. Roger D. Abrahams elucidates this difference as pertaining to their enactment in secular versus sacred domains. Despite their mode of performance, Abrahams (177) notes, “festivals and rituals still seem part of the same human impulse to intensify time and space within the community and to reveal mysteries while being engaged in revels.” Festivals, like rituals, have the power to transform and renew. During the football season, each week is a new beginning. New hope builds around the Saints game. Game preparation and anticipation seem to define the time and the media provides the beat to that clock. When the game ends in victory, the spirits of those going to work are lifted and the week is off to a good start. When the Saints suffer defeat, the communal groan turns into an American version of the stiff upper lip. On the night of the first home-game after Katrina, the hope for transformation and renewal, personal and social, was up front and on top of everyone’s mind.

New Orleanians talk about themselves as a competent people, possessed of the human qualities to succeed and achieve throughout life, even in the face of grave difficulties. This self-identification of New Orleanians as survivors has become a kind of community ideal, in the same way that the Spartans of ancient Greece saw themselves as warriors. In New Orleans, those same ideal civic qualities are projected onto the Saints, so that when the team wins, it inspires people to do the same. According to Gleason,

What has been amazing, I think, is that in light of [the lack of people, infrastructure, or social services], the people of New Orleans have said, “We may not have everything we should have to make this an NFL city, but we will make it happen. We will buy the season tickets. We will provide the services. We will go out of our way to become that city.”

The festivity of the first Saints football game at home in the Superdome after the threat of losing the city and the team lifted the spirits of the people. The simple reality of putting on the festival that was part and parcel, indeed definitive, of the game was cause for hope in greater things in the daily life that the people were trying re-assemble. Romig summed up her feelings by adding: “You are not so miserable when you are standing in line because you have this positive experience. You feel good about New Orleans, which makes dealing with the challenges we face easier.” To actually win—almost too much to hope for—became cause for a victory celebration that was transformative.

RITUAL

Ritual and festival are especially closely linked genres. When you consider ritual in New Orleans, it is important to understand the city's religious traditions. These religious traditions range from those of the majority Roman Catholics to the uniquely ritualized customs of the city's black Baptist churches. Catholic traditions bring a sacramental appreciation of the natural world, combined with an abiding sense of mystery. The divine is to be discovered in both ordinary and extraordinary circumstances. These Catholic traditions inform any public experience of ritual, from jazz funeral processions to Mardi Gras balls to a Saints game.

As members of a Catholic-influenced culture, New Orleanians who gather to participate in a Saints game—the stadium staff, Saints employees, bands, dancers, cheerleaders, announcers, fans, and the team—understand themselves to be doing something more than merely putting on a sports event. They are participating in a service to their particular and unique society. Symbols that define the culture are integrated into the landscape of the game. Vendors serve local cuisine, such as jambalaya and boudin. Most of the music played over the speakers, instead of what is uniformly heard in almost every other football stadium, is about New Orleans. A brass band circulates throughout the Dome during the entirety of the game, blasting their instruments from within the crowd. Fans shout out to one another in chants that would not be understood elsewhere, a coded language that only New Orleanians share. The aim of all of this is not only to have fun, but also to ritually create and manifest a community that is healthy and whole, a community with a shared, distinctive identity.

The players wear uniforms dotted with the fleur-de-lis, a symbol of New Orleans pointing to its deep heritage. Though it does not compete with the American flag, the fleur-de-lis is displayed prominently throughout the city, signifying its French, Spanish and Mediterranean roots. The fleur-de-lis is also understood as a religious symbol, adopted especially by the French, in its shape as a cross and in the image of the lily that traditionally represents the resurrection. Speaking about this symbol, Gleason says,

What other city has a mascot or a symbol that has nothing to do with the actual team? The strangest thing is that the symbol on our helmet is all over the city. You might have someone who has no interest in football, but you go to their house and they have the fleur-de-lis hang-

ing on their wall because that's a symbol of this city and they love this city. That in and of itself—just the symbol on our helmet—is a very unique situation, as far as professional sports go.

The night of the Saints' win over the Atlanta Falcons, fans saw themselves as contributing directly to the emotional, spiritual, and financial core of the city. The athletes understood that their contribution on the field was enormous, that they were active participants in representing the people of a disjointed city. As such, the coach, Sean Payton, was adamant that the players maintain focus leading up to the game. As part of a pre-game preparation ritual, the coach brought the team to the Superdome the Friday before for practice. Stepping onto the field for the first time since the storm, particularly with all the horrific events that had occurred at the Superdome, allowed the team to release the emotions belonging to that moment. They viewed a movie filled with the images of New Orleans post-Katrina. The film would be shown again on Monday night for the spectators, but the coach felt it necessary to give players an advanced warning. Gleason recalls,

We had already seen it on Friday night and there were guys, myself included, shedding tears because there's just this significance of the moment. This is just heavy. But even still, the night of the game to have that place filled, to have the Superdome full of nearly 80,000 people watching. Just being back there was such an accomplishment for the people that were there and for us. At the beginning of the game there was tons and tons of emotion . . . To really make it special we knew we had to win that game. So, one of our major focuses was to allow the people of New Orleans to really get excited and celebrate.

This was a definitive moment. Gwen Kennedy Neville states, "Far from providing an escape or merely a respite from what is really going on in daily life, these types of events state symbolically some significant aspects of the underlying meanings in the daily life itself" (131). One of the paradigmatic assumptions of a New Orleanian is that to be human is to be social. New Orleanians are different in the expression of their abundant social life, revealing to themselves and others that they are a pleasure-filled people. They enjoy that understanding of themselves and celebrate it. This is evident when people gather for Mardi Gras, second lines, and various other public events. New Orleanians enjoy being together. From this perspective, football in New Orleans is not escapism. Rather, it is a massive event that provides an opportunity to look around the stadium and really see one other. This self-identification through a collective makes daily

life meaningful, particularly when that collective has experienced diaspora.

The Monday night football game assumed greater import because people had been scattered over the course of the year. For many, the game was the first time people were re-connecting with one another, exchanging contact information, and sharing Hurricane-related stories. Many drove in from Baton Rouge, Houston, Memphis, Atlanta, and the numerous other smaller communities to which they had evacuated, for this reason. That moment of gathering en masse served as an affirmation that they will gather again, that they will be who they are as a people again in the future. As Romig put it to me,

The historic, thriving, core of the city is alive and that night, that weekend, the news stories surrounding that and the shot of tens of thousands of people outside of the Dome waiting to get into the Dome—that says to people, people are living here. This city is alive again.

CONCLUSION

The experience of the game did not solve the problems of the city or shorten the long road of recovery ahead for New Orleans. What it did was to forge a new determination and drive to do whatever it takes to bring the city back and restore its sense of community. It reinforced powerful and all but defeated desires to recover what was lost and make whole that which is still so wounded. It provided a sense of the future. The Saints' success encouraged people to re-invest in the city emotionally. In New Orleans a renewed sense of cultural pride was making a stand.

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Objects of Desire: Auction Houses, Estate Brokers, and the Marketplace of Heritage

By Janet Hoshour

heritage *n.*

1. **property that is or may be inherited**; an inheritance.

2. **valued things** such as historic buildings **that have been passed down from previous generations** [as modifier] of special value and worthy of preservation.

3. (*archaic*) **a special or individual possession**; an allotted portion. God's chosen people (the people of Israel, or the Christian Church).

Oxford English Dictionary

When I began ethnographic fieldwork at Cindy Smith's auction house and estate brokerage, I was interested in how the stories we construct about ourselves are revealed by the objects we acquire and display. I felt that the secondary market of an auction house would hold unique possibilities to answer questions regarding individual

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Frame photo: Auction table merchandise, 2007. Photo by Janet Hoshour.



Left: “Primitive” pie safe, auction lot #121. Right: 1920’s Hoosier cupboard, auction lot #183. Photos by Janet Hoshour.

identity expression, as well as social trends that reflect broader tastes and values. After accompanying Cindy on an estate liquidation visit to a once-prosperous farm, my focus turned to exploring how identity is impacted when someone parts with objects embedded in their family history. I also observed buying patterns in both secondary and retail markets that reflect a trend to either replicate or buy heritage items. I began considering how these combined dynamics have made what I term “material manifestations of heritage” highly sought-after commodities in contemporary American culture.

Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (5) suggests that things in motion “illuminate their human and social context.” This approach to studying the social life of objects compelled me to follow two items from farm to auction: an old pie safe and a circa-1920’s Hoosier cabinet. Since these particular pieces of furniture are no longer used in households, they have not been manufactured since the mid-20th century. This, coupled with their historical association to farm kitchens, makes them highly sought after antiques by a market that includes dealers, collectors, decorators, and even individual buyers who value a country aesthetic in home furnishings. I believed that following these two pieces would illuminate how personal objects that hold family history, and so collective memory, take on exchange-value in the second-hand and antique marketplace, transforming authentic family heritage into a commodity.

The pie-safe and cupboard came to the auction through Ken, who is a fourth generation farmer in Durham, North Carolina. However, today there is virtually no farm left. In hope of raising money, Ken called Cindy to say that he had some items in his outbuildings that she might be interested in auctioning. When we arrived, we stood on the remaining twenty-five acres of a farm once so prosperous that roads and housing developments in the county have been named after Ken's family. Large executive-style homes were visible through the tree line on three sides of his property. The new houses crowded the property line, enclosing the land, and making the farm seem like the intruder, the misfit.

Ken came out to greet us and give us a little background on the decline of his family's farm:

See that pile of bricks over there? That's the original homestead. My great-grand-daddy built the first cabin there when he came back from the Civil War. I've lived all but five years of my forty-six years somewhere on this piece of property. Did I tell you my daughters are the fifth generation on this land?

He said that he and his cousin across the road were the only family left on the property; the others had sold out to developers, and there was no longer adequate farmland to provide a viable income for two families.

As we began our walk I saw that the property was scattered with a variety of outbuildings of dark weathered wood rotting away and buckling under the weight of their tin roofs. A few newer pieces of equipment were visible here and there in three-sided sheds, but the strongest impression was of a farm slowly sinking into the earth. Ken confessed: "If I get a little emotional with some of this stuff leaving, bear with me. You feel somewhere in your heart and in your mind that the stuff means something...but you can't hold onto it."

We arrived at the first building, which was about two stories high, though only one level. The interior was small, the entire building being only about ten feet square. Light filtered through the gaps in the roof and through the old broken wood of the walls, so it was not difficult to see inside. There were a few large pieces of equipment taking up the floor space, with a variety of detritus stacked randomly throughout the shed. The haphazard storage warranted treading carefully as we negotiated the space. Ken pointed to an old manual grinding machine recalling,

My daddy and I used to grind corn into meal and sell it. We had a stamp made up...the stamped bags are still around here somewhere. We used to have all the different size bags...I've got a story for anything you'll ever ask for.

Against the back wall were two old pie safes, covered in a layer of thick dust suggesting decades of neglect, but, as I would soon learn, not indifference. Ken added: "You can see, me and my family...it's a heritage thing, we don't throw nothing away. We let it rot and go back to its original state." Then he laughed.

As we continued moving through the grayed and decaying outbuildings it became evident that Ken does, in fact, "have a story for everything." As he pointed out each object and site, he shared memories of his family and their lives on this farm. It was true that every building, every item—even the pond that used to water livestock—all held a story of farm life, family, and pride in an unbroken lineage. These reminiscences became a testament to Ken's profound connection to the farm and everything on it, revealing how much he embeds his identity in this land and in his family's old artifacts.

We were at the farm because Ken was in need of money. He shared that his latest business venture had a rough start and that creditors were circling. Cindy had managed to find a few saleable items, including the pie safe and Hoosier cupboard, and noted that because of the condition of the pieces after sitting in the outbuildings for decades, they were ideal "primitives," a term that would virtually guarantee interest from buyers. Ken agreed to let them be auctioned.

When you enter Cindy Smith's Hillsborough, North Carolina auction house on the day of a sale, you enter an environment of chaotic eclecticism. The doors open an hour before the sale for bidders to preview merchandise. The cavernous building is filled with people talking and milling about. Phones ring and shouts sound across the room as last-minute instructions among staff are exchanged. There are young hipsters with piercings and tattoos, elderly men wearing flannel shirts and John Deere caps, and antique dealers in all varieties. Surrounding chairs in the middle of the room, the floors and walls overflow with merchandise. An old sled leans up against a garden bench adorned with beaded lampshades. An orange dresser with a marble top holds a mismatched pair of iron lawn jockeys. Birdhouses share space with an antique cradle and vintage wall phone. And, as at almost every auction, a unique version of the ubiquitous cement garden gnome surveys the scene.



Garden gnome and miscellaneous objects displayed for auction preview.
Photo by Janet Hoshour.

This day's auction would include a pie safe and Hoosier cupboard. The pie safe ended up being bought by a "picker." In the lexicon of auctions and antiquing, a picker is someone who acquires saleable merchandise for other auctioneers or antique dealers, sometimes from an auction, other times directly out of people's homes or barns.



Tabletop auction merchandise with faux Fabergé egg. Photo by Janet Hoshour.

It appeared the pie safe was to continue on to another dealer, increasing in sales value until it reached its final buyer. A woman from Charlotte bought the Hoosier cupboard to place in her kitchen.

Following these items as they move from a place of memory and personal meaning to a completely recontextualized existence raises



Corner of the back wall in auction house where larger pieces are arranged for preview. Photo by Janet Hoshour.

personal meaning to a completely recontextualized existence raises a number of questions. What does it mean to sell the things that reflect who we are and our place in the world? And why is there a market for symbols of a heritage that is not our own? Is it, as Appadurai (28) suggests, “the aesthetics of decontextualization,” which, he argues, “is the heart of the display in the highbrow Western home”? In my fieldwork so far, I’ve found that it is almost exclusively people with disposable income who create exchange-value for these objects and who will recontextualize them in an environment far from any farmhouse or barn. In this sense Appadurai is right. However, it seems to me that there are broader social conditions at work that have created an entirely new market for items labeled “distressed” and “primitive.” Psychologist Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi (27) observes, “in our mobile American society *things* play an important role in reminding us of who we are with respect to whom we belong” [*italics mine*].

To whom do we belong and how do we manifest this materially? Consider the “shabby chic” look that has become its own industry. An example is reflected in the retail giant Target, where an entire aisle in their home goods section is devoted to their “Shabby Chic” merchandise label. Did one’s great-grandmother’s quilt fail to get

ber of retail outlets offer newly manufactured and artificially aged quilts designed specifically to provide a material manifestation of heritage.

In addition to heritage objects found in retail stores and catalogs, flea markets are another outlet where an object's age and wear is often fabricated and illusory. Dealers at these markets offer easily-obtainable contemporary furniture repainted with colors such as Benjamin-Moore's "Heritage Red," then use tricks of the trade, like sanding paint off of corners or flogging the piece with a chain, to create visual evidence of what appears to be generations of use. I have also noticed a marked increase in vendors selling garden furniture, planters, and baker's racks that are manufactured in Mexico with deliberately rusted iron and peeling paint. Buyers have their choice of dozens of these seemingly old, worn, and "one-of-a-kind" items.

As folklorists, we are familiar with the process of romanticizing the past in reaction to industrialization. What is happening now is a new iteration. What I experienced through secondary markets in North Carolina is not solely a mass romanticization of objects that suggest a simpler, purer way of life. Rather, by surrounding ourselves with pie safes that no longer have anything to do with pies, wrought iron furniture that has been sitting outside long enough for just that right amount of rust, and old and broken farm tools that no longer do any work, we are constructing heritage itself as a commodity.

I have gone back and spent time with Ken since the auction and it is clear that loss is a large part of his life right now. He said that he's thinking of giving up, selling the farm, and leaving the area. I asked what it would mean to leave all the family stories that are embedded in his family's land. Ken answered: "It would be hard. It would. You'll have me crying in a minute. In the last ten month I feel like I've aged drastically." Cindy herself says that auctioneers survive on what the industry terms "The Three D's": Death, Divorce and Desperation." Through the field site of an auction house, I was able to see how an individual's perception of self became eroded through the loss of the material objects that manifested his personal story, while the objects themselves circulated as "heritage" in a marketplace reflecting contemporary tastes and values.

Anthropologist Annette Weiner (6) speaks of "enclaved objects," which are objects held back from any type of exchange. As she puts it, "the loss of such an inalienable possession diminishes the self and by extension, the group to which the person belongs." I believe that

objects like pie safes and Hoosier cabinets may also be thought of as “inalienable possessions,” which help us to define who we are by reminding us of who and where we come from. I learned first-hand how the loss of these objects eroded one person’s sense of self and his place in the world. I hope that continued fieldwork will further illuminate the social forces that have formed a contemporary aesthetic that transforms family heirlooms into objects of desire.

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Book Review

Barefoot, Daniel W. *Haints of the Hills: North Carolina's Haunted Hundred, Volume 3*. Winston-Salem, NC: Blair Publishers.

Reviewed by April Brooke Barnette

I grew up in the hills of Western North Carolina where ghost stories are a fixture. This is a prime environment for tales of spooks and haints; even in populated areas something about the mountains evokes feelings of awe. This area, along with most of the South, is so steeped in history that you cannot turn around without finding a place that hosts its own ghost story or legend.

It is very important to preserve these stories, and I believe that Daniel Barefoot is doing exactly that. Barefoot has done a lot of research. *Haints of the Hills* is a three volume series in which he retells a story from each of the one hundred counties in North Carolina. Some are more local legend than ghost story, but all of them are important to the history of that particular county. He has put in much time and much effort to uncover some of these stories. I was surprised to discover that the story from my own Haywood County was one that I had not previously heard. I do recommend that you read his acknowledgements to gain a better understanding of the immense amount of research he conducted to retell these stories.

The stories themselves are written with an easy style that feels like a friend telling you campfire stories. He was able to write histori-

Frame photo: Detail of Cindy Smith's auction house merchandise, 2007. Photo by Janet Hoshour.

cally accurate stories without sounding like an encyclopedia and, on the same note, he kept the supernatural parts minimal enough to prevent it from being “unbelievable.”

All of the tales in this book are wonderful. They are ghost stories and history lessons in one. With each story you gain a greater appreciation for North Carolina’s rich heritage. I wish I could talk about them all, but, in order to leave you wanting more, I will just mention a few: *The Evil Eye*, *Mile High Witch*, and *Spirit of the Cherokees*.

The Evil Eye is based in Haywood County, where I live. It is a tale of a girl who is battered by her father. She is beaten to disfigurement and even loses one eye, which she replaces with a gemstone. She becomes more contemptuous as the years pass and people believe she has witch-like powers. It is said that she can cast her evil eye and make terrible things befall a person. This is just what happens to the men who cross her and try to steal the gemstone from her eye.

The Mile High Witch tells of a reporter who came to Macon County to seek an audience with “Old Nance.” She is described as a textbook witch—cauldron and all—living high on a mountain. This reporter had heard stories of how she would exact revenge on anyone who dared to bother her. The townspeople rarely spoke her name. The reporter tried to talk with the witch, and after angering her, decides that his story was not nearly as important as his own skin. He came back down the mountain and the townspeople then referred to him as “one from the dead.”

The Cherokee were forced to walk the Trail of Tears, a military relocation plan that took place after gold was discovered on their land. *Spirit of the Cherokees* is the story of Tsali, a Cherokee that sacrificed his life so that some of his people would be allowed to remain in their homeland. He took people into hiding rather than march to Indian Territory and then voluntarily went before a firing squad when he was promised that his family’s lands would be returned to them. It is said that he walks the trails of the mountains in hiding now just as he as he did then.

Haints of the Hills is a short book, but Barefoot manages to capture an important part of what makes this state special. I recommend this as a book for anyone: young, old, superstitious, or skeptic. It is a beautiful arrangement of history and myth that will have you taking a step into the past to poke around in its shadows.

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Volume 54, Number 2: Philip Coyle, "Editor's Foreword"; Vita Ruvolo-Wilkes & Paul M. Howey, "The Beat Goes On: A Photo-Essay for the Asheville Drum Circle"; Brown-Hudson Award citations for Clifford Howard Glenn: Banjo and Dulcimer Player and Maker (Steve Kruger & Cece Conway), David Holt: Scholar, Performer, & Producer of Folklife Programs (Laura Boosinger), and Barbara Lau: Folklorist, Exhibit and Festival Organizer, and Societal Activist (Sally Peterson). Community Traditions Award citation for the Music Maker Relief Foundation (Molly Matlock); James Ruchala, "'Sally Ann' and the Blue-Ridge String-band Tradition"; and a review essay on Kim Sloan's *A New World: England's First View of America* (Joyces Joines Newman). (\$5)

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